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# AFCLC *Bulletin*

UNITED STATES AIR FORCE  
CULTURE & LANGUAGE CENTER



## Course focuses on U.S. military culture

ACSC elective builds partnerships, one Airman at a time



*Courtesy photograph*

Dr. Brian Selmeski, Air Force Culture and Language Center chief of plans and policy, presents to a class of Air Command and Staff College international students March 13.

**By Jodi L. Jordan**

Air Force Culture and Language Center Outreach Team

MAXWELL AIR FORCE BASE, Ala. – The classroom is filled with uniformed military personnel, like most classes

here at the Air University, the U.S. Air Force's intellectual and leadership center. These students aren't wearing uniforms with U.S. flags on the sleeves, however. Their dress, and the varied accents heard in the classroom, reflects a cross-section of countries from around the world. The ten international students in class are part of the first-ever "Understanding and Working with the U.S. Military" course at AU, and they are teaching as much as they are learning, according to course instructor Dr. Brian Selmeski.

The graduate-level seminar is part of the Air Command and Staff College's elective program, and it addresses the areas of potential misunderstanding that can affect other countries' ability to work effectively with the U.S. military. At the heart of the instruction is a deep commitment to the U.S. Department of Defense's focus on strengthening global partnerships, Selmeski said.

"The Secretary of Defense said just last month, 'We can't dictate to the world, but we must engage in the world. We must lead with our allies.' In order to be successful in our missions, we have to work with others," Selmeski said. "The course is about building partnerships – one Airman at a time."

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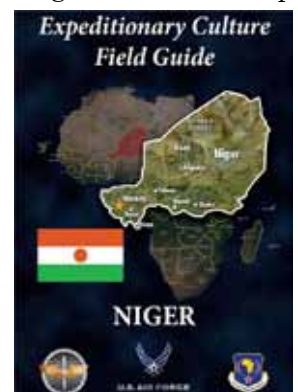
## Niger culture field guide released on AFCLC website

The Air Force Culture and Language Center recently released the Niger Expeditionary Culture Field Guide. The Niger ECFG, as well as guides on 17 other countries, is available for download at AFCLC's secure, common access card-enabled website at <https://wwwmil.maxwell.af.mil/af-clc/ecfg/>.

"Airmen in Air Forces Africa are fully engaged in Africa's dynamic and vibrant operating environment. We expect the release of the Niger Expeditionary Culture Field Guide to enable all Airmen -- whether on a site visit or enabling our long-term engagement strategy -- to understand the 'decisive cultural dimension' that enables us to meet our partners on their terms and achieve collective mission success," said Lt. Col. Brian Lewis, the deputy of U.S. Air Forces Europe/Air Forces Africa Readiness and Integration Division. "This

guide is just one in a growing series of guides that will help AFAFRICA Airmen continue the dialogue with our operating partners in meaningful, relevant terms."

The ECFGs are less than 100 pages and contain the essential elements needed to work effectively in other countries. The other 17 ECFGs currently are also available in pocket-sized, laminated and spiral-bound hard copies. Currently, the Niger ECFG is only available electronically. Printed copies of the Niger ECFG are estimated to be available in late 2013.



Colleagues,

As we approach summer, things aren't slowing down here at the Air Force Culture and Language Center. Airmen continue to seek opportunities to improve their cross-cultural competence, and we are working hard to support them.

We've seen strong demand signals for all aspects of cross-cultural competence learning, from Airmen seeking to be part of our Language Enabled Airman Program, to the thousands of service members who apply for our online, college-credit courses, to the many requests for Expeditionary Culture Field Guides we process.

Our challenge is to figure out the best ways to meet the needs of these



Airmen and their commanders, which is an even more difficult question in the current fiscal environment. How to balance requirements was a big topic of discussion during the Air Force Language, Region and Culture Action Panel meeting I just attended.

We don't have all the answers yet, but our leadership at the Air Force's Language, Region and Culture Pro-

gram Office are working on some great ideas that will help commanders define their LRC personnel needs, and also help them voice those needs to the personnel folks. This will allow us here at the AF-CLC more insight on developing the programs and curricula our leaders need.

Despite the many changes we're seeing in our Service right now, one thing hasn't changed. The team here at AFCLC, as well as our LRC community around the world, is a vital part of the greatest Air Force the world has ever known. I continue to be amazed and humbled by the work you do each day. Thank you.

**Mr. Jay Warwick**  
AFCLC Director

## COMMENTARY

# The Pacific 'Pivot:'

## *What it means for LRC Education and Training*

**By Dr. Robert Kerr**

Air Force Culture  
and Language Center  
Associate Professor of Geography

The Obama administration has made the Pacific region -- Maritime Southeast Asia in particular -- the geopolitical focus of American foreign policy for the foreseeable future. What does this mean for the Air Force and the way it approaches language, region, and culture education and training? Over the next decade Airmen living and working throughout the Pacific region are likely to be increasingly called upon to interact with people from cultures representing worldviews that are very different than those we've grown accustomed to working with over the past decade, and our approach to LRC must adapt to these new realities.

The realities of conflict environments in Iraq and Afghanistan in the last decade necessitated "Just-in-Time" cultural training that focused heavily on the "Do's and Don'ts" of dealing with people living on the thin edge separating insurgency from cooperation. This training tended to be reactive and largely dealt with on the ground tactical realities. Many Airmen, whether in training and advisory roles, Provincial Reconstruction Teams, Force Protection, or Special Operations benefitted greatly from this education and training, but how much of that translates to the emerging building partnerships mission in Asia? In this critical time of change from a wartime posture in the Middle East to a partnership building posture in the Pacific, it is important we balance between retaining critical lessons learned, yet not get caught letting our experiences cloud our collective vision.

The recent experience of most Asians is much different than that of

Iraqis and Afghans. While Iraq and Afghanistan have both suffered decades of social and economic strife, the material and even political conditions of most Asian countries has drastically improved in the same period. We are engaging in these areas more out of long-term interest than immediate necessity. LRC education and training needs to be adjusted in order to address three key components as we "Pivot" toward the Pacific realm: 1) Building partnerships in Asia is a 24/7 endeavor and the nature of the interactions among Airmen, partner air forces, and local populations are likely to be very different than what most Airmen have experienced in either Iraq or Afghanistan; 2) The cultures and worldviews of most of the people in Asia are much more unfamiliar to us than we realize; this means we have a steep learning curve when it comes to building Cross-Cultural Competence among Airmen who will live and

The views expressed in this newsletter are of the authors and not of the U.S. Air Force, Department of Defense, or any other government agency.

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# AFCLC partners with DLI for Language Training Detachment

**By Robert A. Miltersen**

Defense Language Institute  
South Central Regional Director

It may be a surprise to people outside of the language professionals' community, but the Air Force Culture and Language Center hosts a Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center Language Training Detachment here at Air University at Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala.

The LTD has been part of the AU language program since 2006. Since that time, the LTD has provided culturally-based language instruction to thousands of Air War College and Air Command and Staff College students. Combined, the AWC and ACSC student body consists of more than 500 students who receive instruction in Arabic, Chinese, Dari, Spanish, French, German, Russian and Swahili.

Since January 2012, the LTD here has also had the distinction of being the headquarters for DLI's entire South Central Region. Other regional headquarters include Headquarters Stuttgart, Germany (Europe Region), Camp Lejeune, N.C., (Northeast Region) and Monterey, Calif. (Western Region).

The DLI South Central region consists of seven LTDs, including Maxwell AFB. The other South Central LTDs are at Ft. Leavenworth, Kans.; Ft. Benning, Ga.; Ft. Polk, La.; with three more located at Hurlburt Field, Tampa and Miami, Fla. Language instruction at these LTDs varies based on host unit requirements.

In addition to the LTDs currently established in the South Central Region, there are requests to stand up more detachments, specifically one at the Georgia Language Training Center in Marietta, Ga., in support of the Army National Guard and another supporting the Army's Regionally Aligned Force for U.S. Africa Command at Ft. Riley, Kan.

An overview of the South Central Region LTDs and their responsibilities is below.

## **Maxwell AFB, Ala.**

The Maxwell Language Training Detachment primarily focuses on providing language instruction to Air University students in support of Department of Defense policy. In addition to the Professional Military Education mission, the LTD provides language support to the Air Force Culture and Language Center's Language Enabled Airman Program and General Officer Pre-Deployment Acculturation Course.

## **Ft. Leavenworth, Kans.**

Five language instructors provide instruction to students

at the Army's Command and General Staff College at Ft. Leavenworth. Nearly 400 CGSC students graduate from a DLI language course each year as part of their course elective requirements.

## **Ft. Benning, Ga.**

The mission at Ft. Benning is slightly more unusual since the students are instructors. DLI provides upper-level Spanish language training to instructors of the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation. Since all courses taught at WHINSEC are in the target language of Spanish, instructors must have the language ability to teach at such a level.

## **Ft. Polk, La.**

Home of the Joint Readiness Training Center, the LTD at Ft. Polk provides language instruction primarily to soldiers of the 162<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Brigade and 4<sup>th</sup> Brigade, 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division. Language instruction is primarily pre-deployment training.

## **Hurlburt Field, Fla.**

The LTD at Hurlburt Field is the largest in the South Central region. It consists of a site director, a full-time academic specialist and nine permanently assigned instructors. The LTD supports the Air Force Special Operations Command and trains both General Purpose Force and professional linguist populations.

## **Tampa, Fla.**

The Tampa LTD is the hub for the training of AF/PAK Hands. Participants in the AF/PAK program dedicate three to five years to focus on regional language, culture and counterinsurgency training to help build rapport and enduring relationships with partners in Afghanistan. Phase I training consists of 14 weeks of intense language study in either Pashto or Dari languages. The LTD also supports other United States Central Command language requirements as needed.

## **Miami, Fla.**

The LTD in Miami is located within the Foreign Language Office at United States Southern Command and provides Spanish or Brazilian Portuguese training to its personnel. There are currently more than 600 language-coded billets throughout SOUTHCOM which keep the LTD classes running constantly.

*Editor's Note: Mr. Robert A. Miltersen is the Defense Language Institute's South Central Regional Director and a Department of the Army civilian. Mr. Miltersen is also a retired United States Air Force Russian and Chinese cryptologic linguist.*



# LEAP participant inspires in Indonesia

By Jodi L. Jordan

Air Force Culture and Language Center Outreach Team

“If you work hard, you never know where life will take you,” said Capt. Lia Radulovic during a live radio interview for Indonesian talk show “Morning Coffee” last month. These words held special resonance for Radulovic, a Language Enabled Airman Program participant who was born into poverty in Jakarta 34 years ago. Her hard work led her from Indonesia, through college in the United States, and to her current position as an Officer Training School instructor at Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala. Radulovic’s recent visit to Indonesia marked an important milestone in her life, as she embraced the opportunity “to show the Indonesian people a real-world example of what America’s all about,” she said.

Radulovic returned to Indonesia as part of her participation in LEAP, a career-long language and culture learning program operated by the Air Force Culture and Language Center. Program participants attend online training as well as Language Intensive Training Events every few years that immerse the participants in the language they study.

For Radulovic, her LEAP training mission was to attend a language school in Jakarta. Soon after she and Lt. Gary Suharli, another LEAP participant on the training mission, arrived, they began putting their language skills to real-world use, helping the U.S. embassy there with a variety of translation duties.

It wasn’t just translation that kept Capt. Radulovic busy during her month in Indonesia, however. According to Col. Kevin Booth, the air attaché at the embassy, Capt. Radulovic’s most important contribution was her inspiring story. When local media outlets learned of Capt. Radulovic’s heritage and her accomplishments, she became a sought-after interview subject for television and radio.

“The most important work she did here was public outreach to Indonesian youth and women,” Booth said. “Her example as an Indonesian born woman who works her way through the U.S. university system, then joins the United States Air Force and becomes a successful officer and instructor at our OTS is compelling to any audience, but especially to young people here in Indonesia.”

Radulovic connected with Indonesian audiences through her personal experiences. She shared the reality of her upbringing, which was sometimes harsh in its austerity. “I was a little girl, and I had just gotten my first pair of high-heeled shoes. I wore them to school, and I was so proud of them,” she said. “On my way walking home from school, it started raining ... It flooded, and I was walking home in water up to my hips, but I held those shoes up above my



Courtesy photograph

Capt. Lia Radulovic, a Language Enabled Airman Program participant and instructor at Officer Training School at Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala., gives a presentation on education to a group of high school students in Jakarta, Indonesia

head so they wouldn’t be ruined. As I walked, I looked at the beautiful houses I passed, all behind high gated walls, and I thought, ‘I bet those people don’t have to walk home barefooted carrying their shoes!’”

Because of her opportunities in the United States Air Force, which recognizes the valuable contributions different cultures provide, Radulovic said she is able to see both sides of the scene today, while maintaining a foothold in each. As such, she is eager to share her experiences to demonstrate to others who share her background of the possibilities for improving their circumstances. “Now...I live in a gated community,” said Radulovic. “I can show them the opportunities are boundless.”

Opportunity and diversity were recurring themes during Radulovic’s media appearances, including a spot on a popular Indonesian talk show “Bukan Empat Mata.” Radulovic said that she was not the stereotypical American that many in Indonesia would expect. Being of Javanese ethnicity (the largest ethnic group in Indonesia,) Muslim and female, she said she was a living example of the diversity of the United States. “We can tell people all day long, but until we show the diversity, it doesn’t mean as much.”

Having the LEAP participants, show, not just tell, the American story was invaluable to the U.S. embassy, according to Booth. “LEAP is a forward looking program that invests in our Airmen and our future; we need Airmen who understand other nations and other cultures; these Airmen will provide the key to successful collaboration and partnerships with nations like Indonesia,” Booth said. “Our nation and Air Force must continue to look forward and invest in capabilities that will enhance our ability to work closely with partner nations in the future; LEAP is wise investment and LEAP Airmen are a key component to future engagement with partner nations.”

work in partner Asian countries; and 3) We've got time to do it right. As is the case in Iraq and Afghanistan, relationship building in most Asian countries is the precondition of getting anything accomplished, but relationship building with Asian partners is very different than in the Middle East. Let's briefly look at each of these components.

**Building partnerships in Asia is a 24/7 Endeavor:** In non-combat environments, BP is a 24/7 endeavor that requires adaptive negotiation skills and Cross-Cultural Competence. In Iraq and Afghanistan, interactions with both our military partners and local populations were frequent, but often short and direct. Yes, many, many council meetings, shuras, and training sessions went on for hours at a time and hardly seemed short at the moment, yet at the end of the day virtually all Airmen spent the majority of time sequestered from most locals. When it comes to building relationships with our Asian allies, Airmen are likely to be working in highly permissive environments. This context requires an entirely different approach to cross-cultural relations. All personal interactions, whether working with military counterparts or asking for more towels at a downtown hotel could have broad strategic impacts diplomatically. Interacting with the local population on their own terms, unarmed and without extensive local knowledge shifts the power-equation in a serious way! This requires "deep" knowledge about a culture that goes far beyond the "do's" and "don'ts" of Just-In-Time culture training, and will require all Airmen to think strategically while acting tactically in cross-cultural interactions. It will also require an operational approach that not only integrates LRC into all aspects of mission planning and execution, but frames our interactions with local nationals after the flying is done.

**The cultures and worldviews of most of the people in Asia are much more unfamiliar to us than we realize.** The Pacific region is a staggeringly diverse place, with more than 3,000 distinct languages and numerous religions practiced among almost 4 billion people. The geography of Asia is so diverse it is impossible to say that Asians even have a remotely shared experience with their environments. However, in spite of this diversity there are some broad generalizations that can be generally applied to most of the people in the area. One generalization is an emphasis on the community rather than the individual. Most Americans know the maxim "The squeaky wheel gets the grease." It exemplifies the spirit of American entrepreneurship and our children are encouraged to "follow their dreams" and stand out from the crowd. The reality in much of Asia is very different. There is a Chinese saying mirrored in societies throughout the region that says "The loudest duck gets shot!"

Another significant difference among American and many Asian cultures has to do with worldviews. Most Americans tend to approach situations from an "either/or" point of view. Asian cultures tend to be more comfort-

able with "shades of gray". Asian religions are an excellent illustration. In the West, one is considered either religious or not; Christian or Muslim or Jewish. It is generally unacceptable in the U.S. to declare adherence to more than one religious tradition. In Asia, the lines between religious and secular, and among faiths themselves, are often blurred. For example, the Japanese have blended Shinto and Buddhist traditions for centuries, and today many even hold Christian-style weddings. In India, it's common to see Hindus performing rituals adopted from Christianity and other faiths. In the worldviews of many cultures in Asia, there's nothing contradictory about this. However, not all religions in Asia are this way, especially Islam. Many don't realize there are more Muslims in the Pacific region than in the Middle East, but it's important to remember that though there are religious similarities between Middle Eastern and Asian Muslims, their historical, geographic, and social realities are much different. Air Force leaders must address how to take such attitudes into account when defining what mission success might look like in an Asian BP context.

**We've got time to get it right:** It is common knowledge, and indisputable fact that the Asian region has become more economically powerful since the later part of the 20th century. Even with a few inevitable bumps in the road, this reality is not likely to change. This knowledge provides the Air Force with an opportunity to be proactive, rather than reactive in not only our operations, but also in our LRC education and training. Air Force involvement in the Global War on Terror required a shift in our collective focus to the Middle East. An unfortunate side-effect has been the significant loss in our corporate memory and expertise of Asia. There has been continuity provided through exercises such as Cobra Gold in Thailand, the various COPE exercises throughout the area, and others, but in a region where personal relationships are so crucial in forging partnerships, we've got some significant catching up to do. The good news is, we've got time, and the Air Force should be deliberate in defining exactly what it wants out of its Asian partnerships and identify ways to re-institutionalize our collective knowledge of Asia's languages, geographic realities, and cultures. It should be consistent with American foreign policy and Department of Defense security posture statements, but it must also be "air-minded" in its approach.

In a fiscally constrained environment, forging strong relationships with our partners throughout the Pacific region is necessary if the United States is going to remain an influential player. Doing so requires the Air Force take a deliberate approach in building strong regional partnerships, and this necessitates the need for solid LRC education and training among all Airmen, regardless of rank or AFSC. The demands placed upon today's Airman call not only for technical superiority in any number of career fields, but also being able to effectively work with and live amongst partners representing a multitude of cultures, worldviews, religious backgrounds, and nationalities.

## **UNDERSTANDING, continued from Page 1**

A select group of ACSC master's degree program international students competed to participate in this first iteration of the course. The course began with an overview of U.S. culture, and continued with discussions and readings on the cultures of the branches of the armed services, the U.S. military's perspective on gender, as well as relationships with civilian communities, among other topics covering 12 weeks of instruction. Throughout the course, students are asked to consider the underlying beliefs that they and their American counterparts bring to their joint missions.

"Culture is like an iceberg," said Capt. Peter Hribersek, Slovenian aircraft maintenance officer and student in the class. "There is the top, visible layer that is easy to see. But if you want to understand, you have to go deeper. It's based on the values, beliefs, the systems ... The course has helped me for trying to stop judging others by my standards. It's not which culture is better than another one, but about understanding others."

Selmeski, who is also the chief of plans and policy for the Air Force Culture and Language Center, said that the course's topic has been overlooked in the past.

"For the past decade, the U.S. armed forces have undertaken significant efforts to teach service members about the cultural beliefs and practices of our adversaries, partners and non-combatants. Yet, there has been little emphasis on de-

veloping deep understanding on the culture of the U.S. military itself," Selmeski said. "Seeing ourselves as others see us is a lot harder than it sounds. International officers are perfectly positioned to help with this. They teach me something new every class."

According to Maj. William Racal, a helicopter pilot in the Philippines Air Force, different cultural perspectives can result in misunderstanding and inadvertent offense. "I have seen it many times when working bilaterally or in social functions with U.S. forces in the Philippines," he said. "In the U.S., lower-ranking people are allowed to express their opinions to higher-ranking freely. I don't expect such freedom. Maybe this affects a negotiation, how discussions end up, and causes an offense." Racal stressed the importance of two-way communication between militaries working together, saying "In the U.S., you're used to going other places. It is your practice. We should also work and not have a one-way process. This is better to accomplish the mission."

Selmeski plans to take the insights garnered from this initial class, and use them to develop a guidebook on U.S. military culture that other countries can use to enhance partnership operations with the U.S. The guidebook will be similar to a series of guides the AFCLC has produced on other countries, and will be a durable, easily transported product that will give readers the essential information about working with the U.S. military, Selmeski said.

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## **ABOUT THE AFCLC**

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**AFCLC VISION:** The Air Force Culture and Language Center, as the acknowledged experts, will lead the U.S. Air Force in building a cross-culturally competent Total Force to meet the demands of the Service's dynamic global mission.

**AFCLC MISSION:** The Air Force Culture and Language Center creates and executes language, region and cultural learning programs for Total Force Airmen, and provides the Service with the subject matter expertise required to institutionalize these efforts.

The Air Force Culture and Language Center was founded at Air University in April 2006, embracing the Air Force Chief of Staff's intention to improve Airmen's cross-cultural competence.

In April 2007, the Air Force further demonstrated its commitment to culture learning by selecting cross-cultural competence as the centerpiece of Air University's re-accreditation efforts. In December 2007, the Center was made responsible for culture and language training, as well as education, across the entire Air Force.

Air University's Spaatz Center hosts the AFCLC. The AFCLC's Language, Region and Culture Departments are staffed with a team of highly-qualified military and civilian experts. Since 2008, the AFCLC has partnered with the Air Force Negotiation Center of Excellence, which is co-located with the AFCLC, at Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala.

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